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ABSTRACT

Using as a data base a sample of 1,939 projects dealing with research and development, a comparison was made to determine the qualitative differences in types of projects funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and the United States Office of Education (USOE) for children and youth. Variables of interest include type of research, target population, and performing organization. The variable having the greatest explanatory power was type of project, indicating that NIE differed from USOE in greater use of nonprofit organizations to conduct research and in greater emphasis on projects directed at children in general, rather than at special target populations. In part, the differences between NIE and USOE projects are due to legislative mandates, but the differences do exist, can be identified, can be quantified, and can be described in terms of project characteristics. (Author/IRT)

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WHO IS DOING WHAT: AN EMPIRICAL COMPARISON OF N.I.E. AND U.S.O.E. FUNDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A Paper Developed for Session 19.25: Analysis of Federal Policies

at

The Annual Meeting of the
American Education Research Association
Toronto, Canada
March, 1978

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by

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The Office of Child Development (now a part of the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families) and the membership of the Interagency Panels also provided major support for the research for this paper.

In surveying the status of educational research, development, demonstration, and evaluation in the country, the major proportion is sponsored at the Federal level by the two agencies having specific legislative mandates in the area; the National Institute of Education and the United States Office of Education. How do they vary? Examination of the enabling legislation offers answers as do the mission statements at the respective agencies. However, oft times a casual perusal of the efforts of the agencies may indicate more similarities than differences. This paper examines the respective characteristics of the research and development support by USOE and NIE in terms of variables useful in policy planning.

Although these project variables are explained in greater detail later in the paper they are, briefly, (1) type of research activity, (2) performing organization, (3) primary substantive focus, (4) target population characteristics, (5) secondary substantive focus, and (6) set of variables which included use of teaching methods, instructional materials, parent involvement, and dissemination. The work that underlies this paper was done in close collaboration with NIE personnel[1] whose approval of the variables provided an empirical validity. This analysis may also be of interest because of the implications for the field of education and also because of the methodology, which isolates the aspects on which the agencies differ and could be generalized to other sets of similar data.

Definitions

Educational research projects were defined as those projects which "investigate, evaluate, or demonstrate, the provision of educational curriculum for children or adolescents; the use of innovative teaching procedures or approaches to instruction; the use or development of

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[1]See acknowledgements.

of instructional materials for children or adolescents; or conduct basic research in either cognitive development (the process by which knowledge is acquired) socioemotional development (the process of socialization)."

The IRIS classification scheme contains some 900 codes categorizing the salient characteristics of each project. The general categories of information collected are: project information, including funding arrangement, duration, scope, sample size, state and auspices; targeted population information; kind of research; focus of research, primary and secondary; areas of research, including developmental processes, study of research methods, family, broader social environment, people in the child's environment, and intervention programs; and principal investigator information. Projects are included in the system if they are designed to benefit children or youth, prenatal through twenty-four years old, and fall into the following categories of research related activities:

1) Basic research directed primarily at increasing knowledge, discovering basic relationships, or providing background information.
2) Applied research directed at the solution to specific problems.
3) Development of products including tests, systems, models, equipment, materials or methods.
4) Demonstration or pilot study to field test, on a small or large scale, the method of operation or applicability of a research or program model.
5) Evaluation of the effectiveness of a broad program, project, model, strategy, materials, methods, or costs.
6) Research support and utilization activities directly related to planning or disseminating research, including conferences, publications, and information systems.
7) Policy research on needs, goals, priorities, or guidelines affecting children and youth.

Data Base

The data for the study was provided by an extensive data collection effort sponsored by the Interagency Panels for Research and Development on Early Childhood and Adolescence. These Panels are made up of Federal agencies having an RDD&E mandate for early childhood and/or adolescence (See Appendix A for Agency list). A fundamental precept of the Panels is that an understanding of the research emphases of each member agency can contribute to the process of formulating policies designed to maximize the effectiveness of the Federal support of research and development. The outcome of this concern is the Interagency Research Information System (IRIS).

The 1975 IRIS file contains classification, principal investigator, and funding data on 3,536 projects of the 27 member agencies (see Appendix A), representing a total commitment of more than $370.3 million, of these a total of 2,523 projects (funded at $295,041,146) were classified as research on education.

At the actual data collection level field research assistants were trained for a two week period in the use of the taxonomy (Harrell, 1975) and then sent to each of the Panel agencies to code funded proposals. On a weekly basis they were checked for reliability and validity by exchanging abstracts written in the field and coding them independently then comparing the codes. A 90% similarity in coding was maintained during the coding period. The coders themselves were primarily graduate students in either the health or social sciences and all had bacheler's degrees.

Constraints

- By the mandate of the Panel, only research involving subjects up through 24 years of age is included. Thus, activities of the member agencies that are directed at adult education may be excluded.
- An unknown quantity of applicable projects are overlooked due to a myriad of roadblocks to data collection. In the interest of timeliness and after the close of the fiscal year, data

collection is often performed before an agency has had a chance to compile accurate and complete lists of that year's funding. A further problem exists in collecting information on active but not funded projects, a category rarely dealt with by grants and contracts offices. Another possibility for inadvertant exclusion is that a program exists in some separate office that the data collection staff has no way of knowing about, although every attempt is made to first search out all pertinent research in the agencies and then verify accuracy and completenss of the data. Every year each agency receives a copy of projects and funding for verification. When final lists are produced by the agencies, they are used to update IRIS.

The extent to which these considerations limit the analytical power of the IRIS system is reviewed by Nelson, et al.[2] In very rough terms and based on funds expended rather than number of projects, approximately 62% of the NIE[3] expenditures and 79% of those of USOE in FY '75 are on education research and development, represented by the projects included in IRIS, based on the total estimated knowledge production and utilization funding presented in that report. It is felt that for the purposes of evaluating the comprehensiveness of project data collection the inclusion of NIE salaries and other administrative costs in determining this percentage yields an underestimate, and the actual number of projects may well approach if not exceed the USOE figure.

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[2]Nelson, Carnot, William M. Sowers and Ward S. Mason. "An Estimate of FY 1975 Federal Funding for Educational Knowledge Production and Utilization by Agency, Using Four Data Bases," National Institute of Education, November 1976.

[3]Some projects, sponsored by NIE, and using 2% of NIE funds, were not classified "education research" under the definition. While these projects did indeed study some aspect of education, it was agreed between SRG and NIE that the same selection standards applied to USOE should be used for NIE and that the agreed upon definition was the most accurate in selecting education research from non-education research.

Methodology

The overview analysis first looks at the effectiveness of these variables operating individually and independently in differentiating between NIE and USOE. Next the interactions among these variables which contribute to the explanation of differences are identified by Automatic Interaction Detection (IAD) analysis. Finally, a regression analysis is used to determine the extent to which the statistically significant interactions identified by AID exhibit explanatory power when their effects on the entire population of NIE-USOE projects are measured. Thus, the differences between the two agencies can be described in terms of the statistical significance and explanatory power of single variables and interactions of correlated variables. A detailed discussion of the methodology is available from the authors.

Variables. While a wide variety of project characteristics which could be used to describe differences between NIE and USOE were available, those deemed most relevant fall into six major dimensions:

I. Kind of research: the fundamental type of research activity
II. Type of performing organization
III. Primary focus: the primary substantive topic of the research
IV. Target population characteristics
V. Secondary substantive areas:
    A. Kinds of educational services studied
    B. Curriculum areas studied
VI. Other variables deemed likely to differentiate the two agencies:
    A. Use of teaching methods
    B. Use of instructional materials
    C. Parent involvement
    D. Inclusion of a dissemination effort

Dimensions I, II, and III are attributes with multiple categories on which every project has a single value; dimensions IV, V, and VI consist of a series of characteristics, coded dichotomously, which may or may not be associated with each project. The variables chosen may not be optimal, but they were selected on the basis of their interest to the Research and Development System Support Division in NIE which funded this particular analysis.

Results

The results are arranged by dimension or variable, first operating individually and independently to differentiate between the two agencies, then in an interactive mode via AID. Finally, the results of a regression analysis are presented which provides insight into the explanatory power and significance of the differentiation of each of the variables.

Zero Order Correlations. Table 1 displays the marginals and column percentages for each variable in these six dimensions for OE and NIE, as well as the χ^2, and the proportion of the sum of squares explained by the variable (R^2). All but three variables were significant ($\alpha = .01$ level), and twelve of the 24 variables each explained more than 5% of the total sum of squares. Figure 1 presents the rank of these twelve variables by their explanatory power.

It should be pointed out here that no attempt is made to infer from the sample characteristics of the underlying population from which this sample was taken. Indeed, in interpreting this data, one must recognize the potential for bias introduced by other factors such as the qualification procedure used during data collection. Therefore, the reader must approach the χ^2 and R^2 values with caution: their inclusion here is to assist the reader in interpretation of the sample and its various inter-relationships. No attempt is made, however, to generalize these results to any underlying phenomena, and therefore use in an inferential context would be improper.

It is not surprising to observe that the kind of research explains 32% of the variation between agencies, as this is a direct reflection of differing agency mandates. Several of the Federal statutes governing the activities of the Office of Education call for the development and demonstration of educational services for the solution of specific educational problems. Examples are the activities of the Right-to-Read Effort and the

Division of Bilingual Education. In contrast, one of the four mandates[4] of the National Institute of Education calls for the "support of scientific inquiry into the educational process" for the purpose of developing the knowledge base necessary for improving American education. As a result, NIE supports substantially greater amounts of basic research, evaluation, and research support activities. Differing mandates also contribute to the explanation of the power of the two target population variables, all children and bilingual children, and of the parent involvement variable. Many of the large OE development and demonstration programs are directed at target populations selected on the basis of a specific educational need and require parent involvement in the services developed. The more general NIE mission of investigating all aspects of the educational process results in a much larger percentage of NIE's research directed at benefiting children in general.

Effects of the mandates may also be contributing less directly to the statistical significance of both performing organization and primary substantive focus of the research in explaining agency differences. Both the very heavy emphasis on educational services as a primary focus within OE (1,419 of 1,536 projects) and the large number of OE projects performed by local education agencies reflect the emphasis on providing immediate solutions to specified problems. The NIE research directed proportionately more support than OE to studies focused primarily on child or adolescent development, especially cognitive development, and on methodological issues related to improving the quality of educational research. It follows logically that research with these primary areas of study would be conducted in large part by academic institutions.

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[4] The National Institute of Education: A Brief Outline of Its History Status, and Tentative Plans, USDHEW, Washington, D.C., February 23, 1975.

TABLE 1.

ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS BY VARIABLE*

I. Kind of Research

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Basic Research	105 (26.1)	28 (1.8)		
Development	84 (20.8)	260 (16.9)		
Pilot-Demonstration	50 (12.4)	1124 (73.2)		
Evaluation	56 (13.9)	38 (2.5)	706.9	.321
Other Applied Research	44 (10.9)	47 (3.1)		
Policy Research	13 (3.2)	11 (.7)		
Research Support	51 (12.7)	28 (1.8)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

* Frequencies then column percentages are shown for each category.

II. Performing Organization

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Academic Organization	219 (54.3)	252 (16.4)		
State Education Agency	38 (9.4	123 (8.0)		
Local Education Agency	26 (6.5)	775 (50.5)		
Other State & Local Gov't	9 (2.2)	34 (2.2)	391.9	.179
Non-Profit Organization	78 (19.4)	157 (10.2)		
For-Profit Organization	21 (5.2)	34 (2.2)		
Other Organization	12 (3.0)	157 (10.2)		
Not Reported	0 (0)	4 (.3)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

III. Primary Focus of Research

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
General Child/Adolescent Dev.	10 (2.5)	4 (.3)		
Physical Development	4 (1.0)	4 (.3)		
Cognitive Development	49 (12.2)	39 (2.5)		
Social/Emotional Development	16 (4.0)	7 (.5)		
The Family	2 (.5)	5 (.3)		
The Neighborhood	0 (0)	1 (.1)		
The Broad Social Environment	15 (3.7)	1 (.1)		
Research Methods	39 (9.7)	15 (1.0)		
Health/Welfare Services in Gnrl.	0 (0)	17 (1.1)	446.5	.173
Day Care	0 (0)	4 (.3)		
Health Care	0 (0)	11 (.7)		
Protective Services	0 (0)	8 (.5)		
Educational Services in General	175 (43.4)	432 (28.1)		
Special Education	7 (1.7)	303 (19.7)		
Early Childhood Education	3 (.7)	48 (3.1)		
Elementary Education	28 (6.9)	445 (29.0)		
Secondary Education	33 (8.2)	149 (9.7)		
Post-Secondary Education	22 (5.5)	35 (2.3)		
Alternative Education	0 (0)	7 (.5)		
Juvenile Justice	0 (0)	1 (.1)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

IV. Target Population

All Children

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Children with Special Characteristics	19 (4.7)	827 (53.8)	311.3	.161
All Children	384 (95.3)	709 (46.2)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Physically Handicapped Children

	NIE	OE		
Handicapped	3 (.7)	230 (15.0)		
Not Handicapped	400 (99.3)	1306 (85.0)	59.8	.031
Total Projects	403	1536		

Mentally Retarded Children

	NIE	OE		
Retarded	4 (1.0)	154 (10.0)		
Not Retarded	399 (99.0)	1382 (90.0)	33.6	.017
Total Projects	403	1536		

Learning Disabled Children

	NIE	OE		
Disabled	4 (1.0)	149 (9.7)		
Not Disabled	399 (99.0)	1387 (90.3)	32.1	.017
Total Projects	403	1536		

Bilingual Children

	NIE	OE		
Bilingual	12 (3.0)	417 (27.1)		
Not Bilingual	391 (97.0)	1119 (72.9)	106.8	.055
Total Projects	403	1536		

V. Secondary Substantive Areas

A. Educational Services Studied

Special Education

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Special Education	9 (2.2)	327 (21.3)	79.6	.041
Not Special Education	394 (97.8)	1209 (78.7)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Preschool Education

Preschool Education	8 (2.0)	177 (11.5)	32.6	.017
Not Preschool Education	395 (98.0)	1359 (88.5)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Primary Grades

Primary Grades	100 (24.8)	662 (43.1)	44.0	.023
Not Primary Grades	303 (75.2)	874 (56.9)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Middle Grades

Middle Grades	90 (22.3)	416 (27.1)	3.5	.002
Not Middle Grades	313 (77.7)	1120 (72.9)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Junior High School Grades

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Junior High	79 (19.6)	348 (22.7)	1.6	.001
Not Junior High	324 (80.4)	1188 (77.3)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

High School Grades

	NIE	OE		
High School	93 (23.1)	329 (21.4)	0.4	.000
Not High School	310 (76.9)	1207 (78.6)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

B. Curriculum Topic Studied

Any Educational Curriculum

	NIE	OE		
Educational Curriculum	167 (41.4)	1283 (83.5)	297.6	.154
Not Educational Curriculum	236 (58.6)	253 (16.5)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Basic Academic Curriculum

	NIE	OE		
Basic Curriculum	664 (16.9)	845 (55.0)	189.8	.098
Not Basic Curriculum	337 (83.6)	691 (45.0)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Cultural Awareness Curriculum

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Cultural Curriculum	7 (1.7)	447 (29.1)	131.8	.068
Not Cultural Curriculum	396 (98.3)	1089 (70.9)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Career Education Curriculum

	NIE	OE		
Career Curriculum	4 (1.0)	156 (10.2)	34.2	.018
Not Career Curriculum	399 (99.0)	1380 (89.8)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Health/Drug/Sex Education Curriculum

	NIE	OE		
Health Curriculum	6 (1.5)	245 (16.0)	58.0	.030
Not Health Curriculum	397 (98.5)	1291 (84.0)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

Vocational Education Curriculum

	NIE	OE		
Vocational Curriculum	13 (3.2)	176 (11.5)	23.7	.012
Not Vocational Curriculum	390 (96.8)	1360 (88.5)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

VI. Other Variables

A. Teaching Methods Studied

	NIE	OE	Chi-Squared	R^2
Teaching Methods Studied	153 (38.0)	1021 (66.5)	107.4	.055
Teaching Methods Not Studied	250 (62.0)	515 (33.5)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

B. Instructional Materials Studied

	NIE	OE		
Instructional Materials Studied	42 (10.4)	838 (54.6)	249.1	.128
Instructional Mat. Not Studied	361 (89.6)	698 (45.4)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

C. Parent Involvement in Education Program Studied

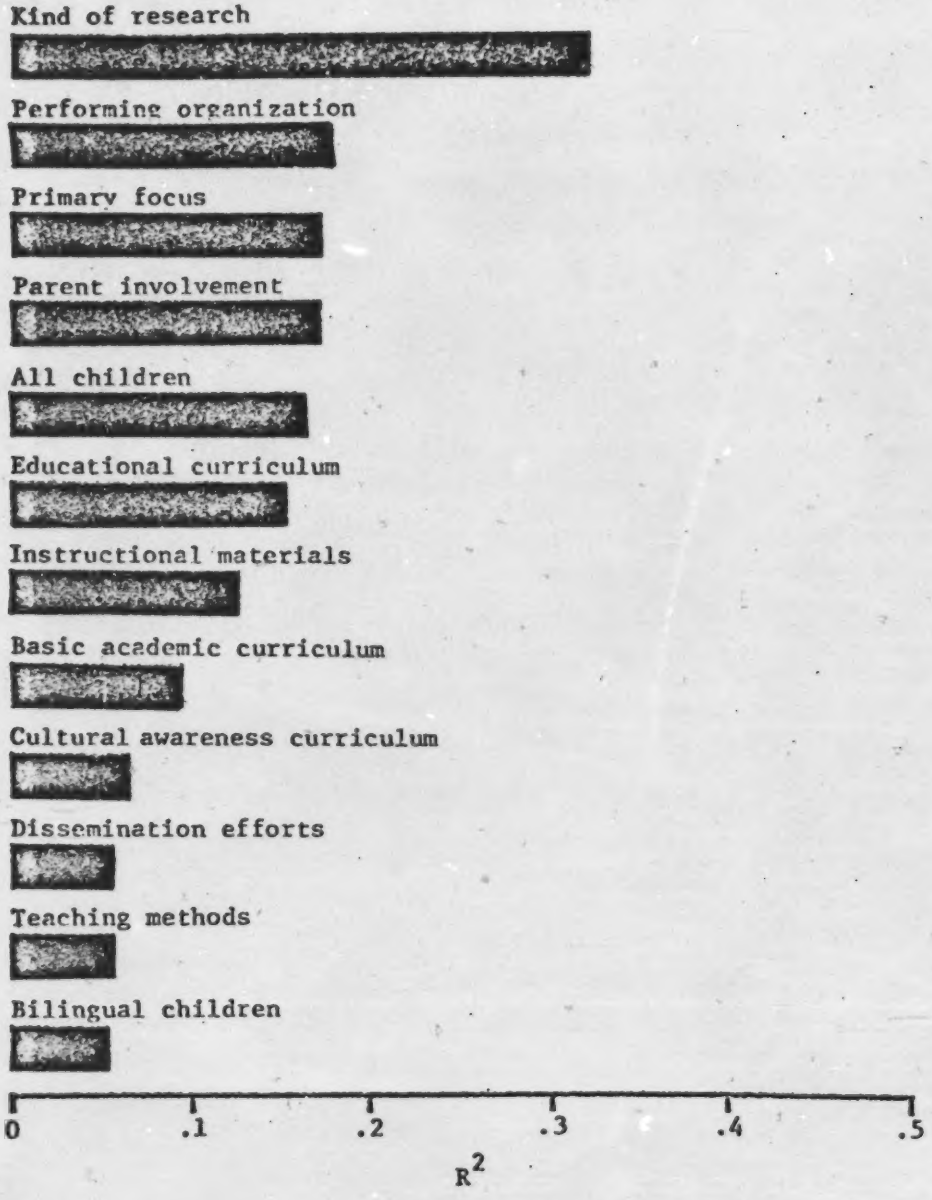
	NIE	OE		
Parent Involvement Studied	18 (4.5)	849 (55.3)	331.3	.171
Parent Involvement Not Studied	385 (95.5)	687 (44.7)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

D. Dissemination Efforts Included in Project

	NIE	OE		
Dissemination Included	74 (18.4)	736 (47.9)	113.4	.058
Dissemination Not Included	329 (82.6)	800 (52.1)		
Total Projects	403	1536		

FIGURE 1

RANKED ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS*



* Table includes only those predictors for which R^2 is greater than 5% and X^2 is significant (α = .01).

Multivariate Analysis

The initial multivariate question was "to what extent do these variables operate in combination (interactively) to explain agency differences?" The AID technique sequentially partitioned the projects into subgroups. Partitioning was done on the basis of the variable which yielded the greatest difference between the means of the two resulting subgroups. Thus, the process identifies subgroups least alike in terms of the criterion, i.e., NIE support.

Figure 2 illustrates the pattern by which the partitioning took place and identifies twelve interactions which significantly discriminate between NIE and USOE. Since NIE projects were arbitrarily assigned a value of one and USOE projects a value of zero, the value shown on the scale at the bottom of Figure 2 represents the proportion of NIE projects in each group. The attributes of the twelve final groups (interactions) include all of those which appeared earlier in the splitting process represented by this "tree."

It should be noted that AID uses the "t" statistic in a different capacity than that in which it conventionally occurs. AID makes no attempt to use "t" in its inferential capacity: rather, it is used as a criterion for splitting termination. If a given parent group is about to split into two subgroups whose means are not significantly different (as defined by "t"), then this split is not made. Thus, "t" is being used to determine the point at which the splitting process should terminate, and should not be interpreted in its inferential capacity.

Of the twelve interactions, four were especially powerful in discriminating between NIE and USOE:

(1) The most powerful group by far was Group 20 which explained 32% of the total variation among projects. This group indicates that 41% of all NIE projects could be described as: basic, general applied, evaluation, or policy research and research support that was performed by academic or non-profit organizations for children in general and was not investigating educational curricula. Less than 1% of all OE projects fell into this category.

(2) Group 21, similar in attributes to Group 20, except that the constituent projects were investigating educational curricula, was a much less powerful predictor, explaining 7% of the total variation among projects. However, 15% of all NIE compared to 1.5% of all OE projects are in this group.

Figure 2
Optimal Partitioning of NIE-USOE Projects

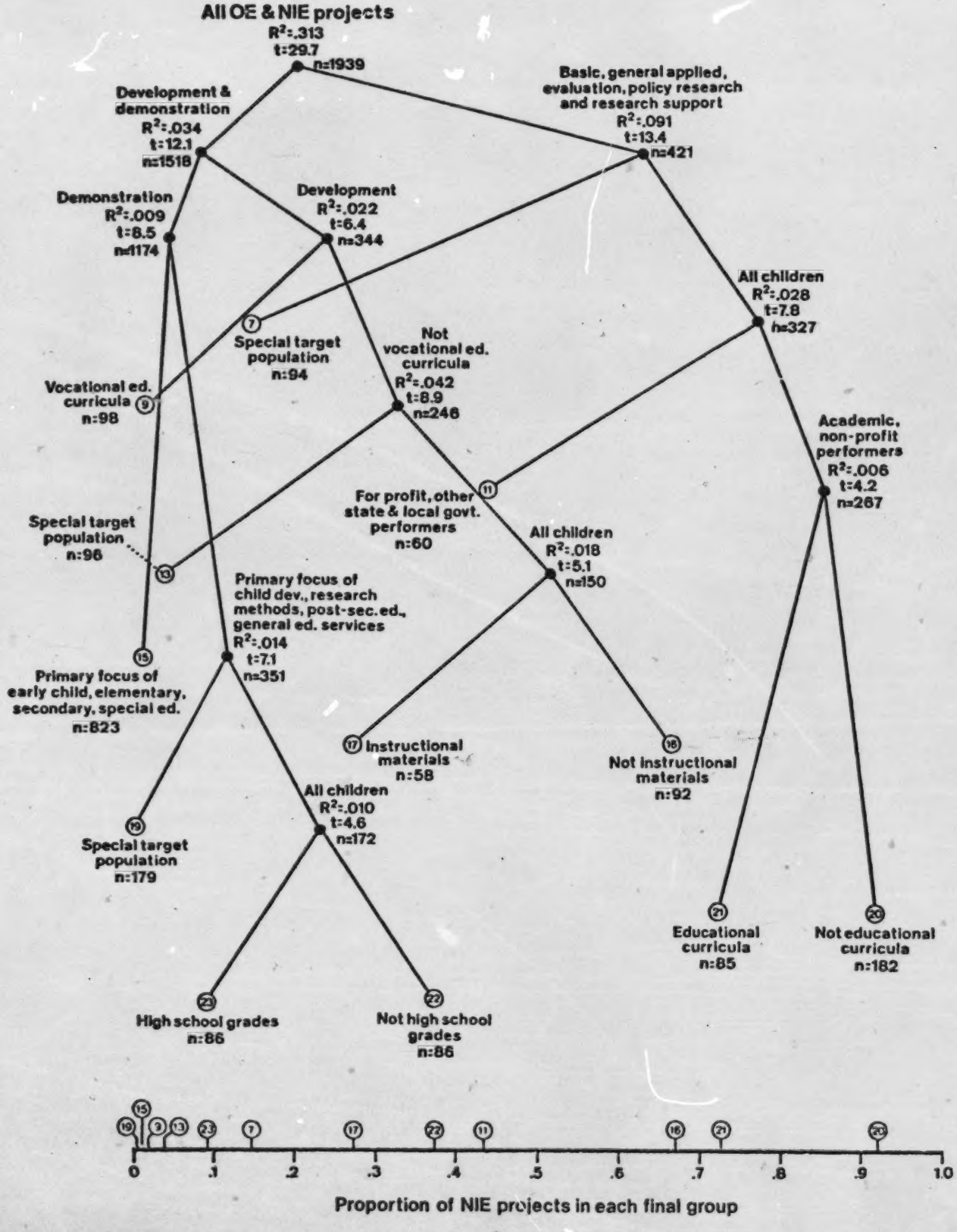


Figure 3
Percentage of NIE Projects in Final Groups

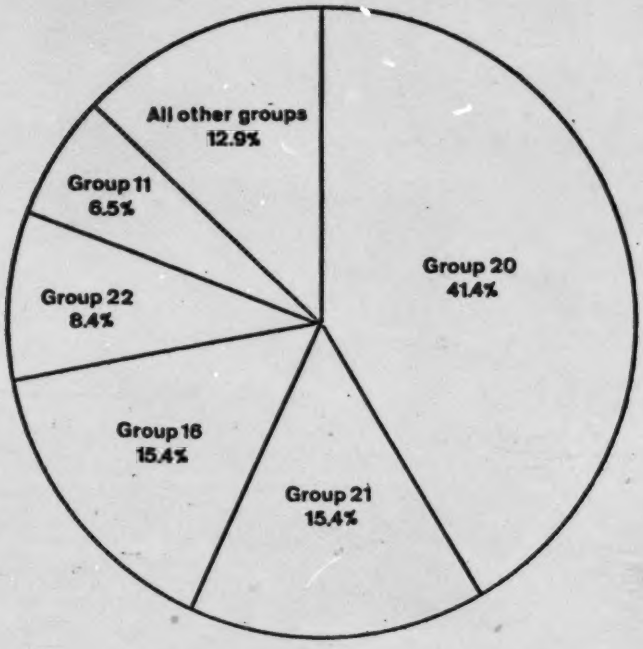
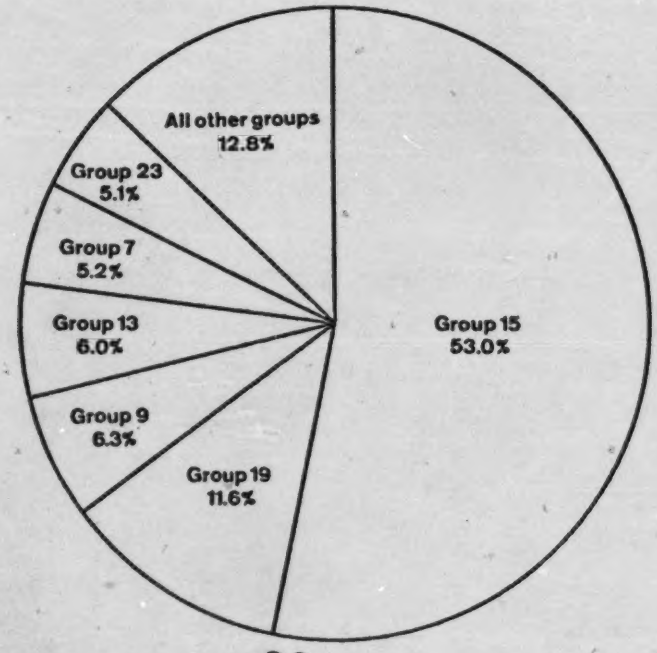


Figure 4
Percentage of USOE Projects in Final Groups



(3) At the OE end of the continuum, Group 15 indicates that 53% of all OE projects were demonstrations focused primarily on early childhood, elementary, secondary, or special education services, while only 2.2% of all NIE projects could be so described. This set of attributes explained 17% of the variation among projects.

(4) Development projects, targeted on children in general, which do not include research on vocational education curricula or instructional materials fall into Group 16 which explained 6% of the variation. Over 15% of all NIE projects shared these characteristics while only 2% of the OE projects could be so classified.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the percentage of each agency's projects which fall into the twelve significant interactions and present a profile of the education research and development supported by each agency.

Thus, AID identified a series of interactions, each of which has significance and power in explaining agency differences.

The second multivariate question is "what is the relative weight of these interactions in explaining the variation among projects across the entire population of projects?" The results of the regression analysis can be seen in Table 2. Six of the twelve interactions explained 58% of the variation among projects. The characteristics identified by Group 20, representing a set of projects investigating general education processes, continued to be the most powerful differentiator with a Beta weight almost double that of the next two interactions. The educational curriculum studies dimension, represented by Group 21, and the general educational program development projects included in Group 16, each explained additional 10% of the variation, becoming more powerful predictors when their effect across all projects is considered by the regression. Figure 5 ranks the interactions by their explanatory power.

Figure 5
Multivariate Interactions Ranked by Explanatory Power

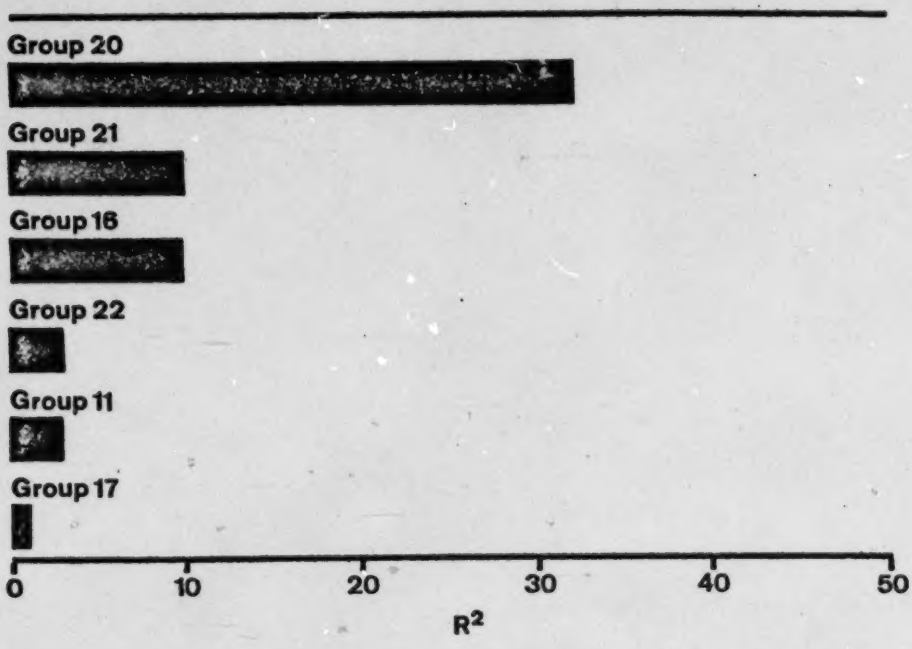


TABLE 2

REGRESSION ON AID-IDENTIFIED INTERACTIONS
A SUMMARY TABLE

Variable	Cumulative	RSQ change	Beta
Group 20	.32	.32	.65
Group 21	.42	.10	.36
Group 16	.52	.10	.35
Group 22	.54	.03	.18
Group 11	.57	.03	.18
Group 17	.58	.01	.11
*			

*All other groups contributed less than 1% of R^2.

Summary and Conclusions

Based on the results of this study with the three phases of analysis, a number of statements can be made given the constraints noted earlier.

(1) A larger proportion of the NIE projects than OE were general educational process studies, defined as research other than development and demonstration, which were typically performed by non-profit or academic organizations and designed to benefit children in general.

(2) A large proportion of the USOE projects were educational curriculum studies of various kinds.

(3) A greater proportion of NIE projects of all kinds were directed at children in general, rather than at special target populations.

Thus, there are differences in the educational research, demonstration, development and evaluation efforts of NIE as contrasted with USOE. In part, they are due to legislative mandates as well they should be, but the differences do exist, can be identified, can be quantified and can be described in terms of project characteristics.

APPENDIX A

NIE AND USOE DIVISIONS INCLUDED IN THE DATA BASE

Agency Cluster	Agency
USOE	
	Division of Bilingual Education
	Follow Through
	Bureau of Education for the Handicapped
	Office of Indian Education
	Office of Career Education
	Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education
	Division of Educational Technology
	Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation
	Division of Plans and Supplementary Centers
	Right-to-Read
	Office of Environmental Education
NIE	
	National Institute of Education

Participating Member Agencies of the Interagency Panel on Early Childhood Research and Development

Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Department of Commerce, Center for Census Use Studies
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW)
- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)
- Office of Human Development (OHD)
- Office of Child Development (OCD)
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke (NINCDS)
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
- Bureau of Community Health Services (BCHS)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- Social and Rehabilitation Service(SRS)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
- Office of Education (OE)
- National Institute of Education (NIE)

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA)
Department of Labor (DOL)
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

The following agencies are also members of the Interagency Panel on Adolescence:

- Office of Youth Development (OYD/DHEW)
- Office of Civil Rights (OCR/DHEW)
- ACTION

It should be noted that organizational changes since the data collection period have changed a number of the agency names and superordinate agencies. For example OCD and OYD are now a part of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families.